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A HOME WEEKLY FOR WINTER NIGHTS AND SUMMER DAYS.

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The Vailed Sorceress; OR, LA MASQUE, THE MIDNIGHT QUEEN.

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Author of "The Dark Secret," "The Twin Sisters," "An Awful Mystery," "Erminie; or, The Gipsy Queen's Vow," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

THE SORCERESS.

The plague raged in the city of London. The destroying angel had gone forth, and kindled with its fiery breath the awful pestilence, until all London became one mighty lazaretto. Thousands were swept away daily; grass grew in the streets, and the living were scarce able to bury the dead. Business of all kinds was at an end, except that of the coffin-makers and drivers of the pest-carts. Whole streets were shut up, and almost every other house in the city bore the fatal red cross, and the ominous inscription: "Lord have mercy on us." Few people save the watchmen, armed with halberds, keeping guard over the stricken houses, appeared in the streets; and those who ventured there, shrank from each other, and passed rapidly on with averted faces. Many even fell dead on the sidewalk, and lay with their ghastly, discolored faces upturned to the mocking sunlight, until the dead cart came rattling along, and the drivers hoisted the body with their pitchforks on the top of their dreadful load. Few other vehicles besides those same dead-carts appeared in the city now; and they plied their trade busily, day and night; and the cry of the drivers echoed dismal through the deserted streets: "Bring out your dead! bring out your dead!" All who could do so had long ago fled from the devoted city; and London lay under the burning heat of the June sunshine, stricken for its sins by the hand of God. The pest-houses were full, so were the plague-pits, where the dead were hurled in cartfuls; and no one knew who rose up in health in the morning but that they might be lying stark and dead in a few hours. The very churches were forsaken; their pastors fed or lying in the plague-pits; and it was even resolved to convert the great cathedral of St. Paul into a vast plague-hospital. Cries and lamentations echoed from one end of the city to the other, and Death and Charles reigned over London together.

Yet, in the midst of all this, many scenes of wild orgies and debauchery still went on within its gates—as, in our own day, when the cholera ravaged Paris, the inhabitants of that facious city made it a carnival; so now, in London, there were many who, feeling they had but a few days to live at the most, resolved to defy death, and indulge in the revelry while they yet existed. "Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow you die!" was their motto; and if in the midst of the frantic dance or debauched revel one of them dropped dead, the others only shrieked with laughter, hurled the livid body out to the street, and the demoniac mirth grew twice as fast and furious as before. Robbers and cut-purses paraded the streets at noonday, entered boldly closed and deserted houses, and bore off, with impunity, whatever they pleased. Highwaymen infested Hounslow Heath, and all the roads leading from the city, levying a toll on all who passed, and plundering fearlessly the flying citizens. In fact, far-famed London town, in the year of grace 1865, would have given one a good idea of Pandemonium broke loose.

It was drawing to the close of an almost tropical June day, that the crowd who had thronged the precincts of St. Paul's since early morning, began to disperse. The sun, that had throbbed the five-long day like a great heart of fire in a sea of brass, was sinking from sight in clouds of crimson, purple and gold, yet Paul's walk was crowded. There were court-gallants in ruffles and plumes; ballad-singers chanting the not-over delicate ditties of the Earl of Rochester; usurers exchanging gold for bonds worth three times what they gave for them; quack-doctors reading in dolorous tones the bills of mortality of the preceding day, and selling plague-waters and anti-pestilential abominations, whose merit they loudly extolled; ladies, too, richly dressed, and many of them masked; and book-sellers who always made St. Paul's a favorite haunt, and even to this day patronize its precincts, and flourish in the regions of Paternoster Row and Ave Maria Lane; court pages in rich liveries, pert and flippant; serving-men out of place, and pickpockets with a keen eye to business; all clashed and jostled together, raising a din to which the Plain of Shinar, with its confusion of tongues and Babylonian workmen, were as nothing.

Moving serenely through this discordant sea of his fellow-creatures came a young man booted and spurred, whose rich doublet of cherry-colored velvet, edged and spangled with gold, and jaunty hat set slightly on one side of his head, with its long black plume and diamond clasp, proclaimed him to be somebody. A profusion of snowy shirt-trill rushed impetuously out of his doublet; a black-velvet cloak, lined with amber-satin, fell picturesquely from his shoulders; a sword with a jeweled hilt clanked on the pavement as he walked. One hand was



While Sir Norman gazed in astonishment and incredulity, the scene faded away and another took its place.

covered with a gauntlet of canary-colored kid, perfumed to a degree that would shame any belle of to-day; the other, which rested lightly on his sword-hilt, flashed with a splendid opal, splendidly set. He was a handsome fellow, too, with fair, waving hair (for he had the good taste to discard the ugly wigs then in vogue), a tall and remarkably graceful figure, and an expression of countenance wherein easy good-nature and fiery impetuosity had a hard struggle for mastery. That he was a courtier of rank, was apparent from his rich attire and rather aristocratic bearing, and a crowd of hangers-on followed him as he went, loudly demanding spur-money. A group of timbrel girls, singing shrilly the songs of the day, called boldly to him as he passed; and one of them, more free and easy than the rest, danced up to him, striking her timbrel, and shouting rather than singing the chorus of the then popular ditty:

"What care I for pest or plague?
We can die but once, God wot,
Kiss me, darling—stay with me;
Love me—love me, leave me not!"

The darling in question turned his bright

blue eyes on that dashing street-singer with a cool glance of recognition.

"Very sorry, Nell," he said, in a nonchalant tone, "but I'm afraid I must. How long have you been here, may I ask?"

"A full hour by St. Paul's; and where has Sir Norman Kingsley been, may I ask? I thought you were dead of the plague."

"Not exactly. Have you seen—ah! there he is. The very man I want."

With which Sir Norman Kingsley dropped a gold piece into the girl's extended palm, and pushed on through the crowd up Paul's Walk.

A tall, dark figure was leaning moodily with folded arms, looking fixedly at the ground, and taking no notice of the busy scene around him, until Sir Norman laid his ungloved and jeweled hand lightly on his shoulder.

"Good-morning, Ormiston! I had an idea I would find you here, and—but what's the matter with you, man? Have you got the plague? or has your mysterious inamorata jilted you? or what other annoyance has happened to make you look as woebegone as old King Lear, sent adrift by his tender daughters to take care of himself?"

"I was thinking of her," said the young man, moodily, and with a darkening brow.

Sir Norman favored him with a half-amused, half-contemptuous stare for a moment; then stopped at a huckster's stall to purchase some

cigarettes; lit one, and, after smoking for a few minutes, pleasantly remarked, as if the fact had just struck him:

"Ormiston, you're a fool!"

"I know it!" said Ormiston, sententiously.

"The idea," said Sir Norman, knocking the ashes faintly off the end of his cigar with the tip of his little finger—"the idea of falling in love with a woman whose face you have never seen! I can understand a man's going to any absurd extreme when he falls in love in proper Christian fashion, with a proper Christian face; but to go stark, staring mad, as you have done, my dear fellow, about a black loo mask, why—I consider that a little too much of a good thing! Come, let us go."

Nodding easily to his numerous acquaintances as he went, Sir Norman Kingsley sauntered leisurely down Paul's Walk, and out through the great door of the cathedral, followed by his melancholy friend. Pausing for a moment to gaze at the gorgeous sunset with a look of languid admiration, Sir Norman passed his arm through that of his friend, and they walked on at a rapid pace, in the direction of old London Bridge. There were few people abroad, except the watchmen walking slowly up and down before the plague-stricken houses; but in every street they passed through they noticed huge piles of wood and coal heaped down the center. Smoking zealously, they had walked on for a season in silence, when Ormiston ceased puffing for a moment, to inquire:

"What are all these for? This is a strange time, I should imagine, for bonfires."

"They're not bonfires," said Sir Norman; "at least, they are not intended for that; and if your head was not fuller of that masked Witch of Endor than common sense (for I believe she is nothing better than a witch), you could not have helped knowing. The Lord Mayor of London has been inspired, suddenly, with a notion, that if several thousand fires are kindled at once in the streets, it will purify the air, and check the pestilence; so when St. Paul's tolls the hour of midnight, all these piles are to be fired. It will be a glorious illumination, no doubt; but as to its stopping the progress of the plague, I am afraid that it is altogether too good to be true."

"Why should you doubt it? The plague cannot last forever."

"No. But Lilly, the astrologer, who predicted its coming, also foretold that it would last for many months yet; and since one prophecy has come true, I see no reason why the other should not."

"Except the simple one that there would be nobody left alive to take it. All London will be lying in the plague-pits by that time."

"A pleasant prospect; but a true one, I have no doubt. And, as I have no ambition to be buried headlong into one of those horrible holes, I shall leave town altogether in a few days. And, Ormiston, I would strongly recommend you to follow my example."

"Not I!" said Ormiston, in a tone of gloomy resolution. "While La Masque stays, so will I."

"And perhaps die of the plague in a week."

"So be it! I don't fear the plague half as much as I do the thought of losing her!"

Again Sir Norman stared.

"Oh, I see! It's a hopeless case! Faith, I begin to feel curious to see this enchantress, who has managed so effectually to turn your brain. When did you see her last?"

"Yesterday," said Ormiston, with a deep sigh. "And if she were made of granite, she could not be harder to me than she is!"

"So she doesn't care about you, then?"

"Not she! She has a little Blenheim lap-dog, that she loves a thousand times more than she ever will me!"

"Then what an idiot you are, to keep haunting her like her shadow! Why don't you be a man, and tear out from your heart such a goddam?"

"Ah! that's easily said; but if you were in my place, you'd act exactly as I do."

"I don't believe it. It's not in me to go mad about anything with a masked face and a marble heart. If I loved any woman—which, thank Fortune, at this present time I do not—and she had the bad taste not to return it, I should take my hat, make her a bow, and go directly and love somebody else made of flesh and blood, instead of cast-iron! You know the old song, Ormiston:

"If she be not fair for me
What care I how fair she be!"

"Kingsley, you know nothing about it!" said Ormiston, impatiently. "So stop talking nonsense. If you are cold-blooded, I am not; and—I love her!"

Sir Norman slightly shrugged his shoulders, and flung his smoked-out weed into a heap of firewood.

"Are we near her house?" he asked. "Yonder is the bridge."

"And yonder is the house," replied Ormiston, pointing to a large, ancient building—an ancient even for those times—with three stories, each projecting over the other. "See! while the houses on either side are marked as pest-stricken, here alone bears no cross. So it is: those who cling to life are stricken with death; and those who, like me, are desperate, even death shuns."

"Why, my dear Ormiston, you surely are not so far gone as that! Upon my honor, I had no idea you were in such a bad way."

"I am nothing but a miserable wretch! And I wish to Heaven I was in yonder dead-cart, with the rest of them—and she, too, if she never intends to love me!"

Ormiston spoke with such fierce earnestness, that there was no doubt his sincerity; and Sir Norman became profoundly shocked—so much so, that he did not speak again until they were almost at the door. Then he opened his lips to ask, in a subdued tone:

"She has predicted the future for you—what did she foretell?"

"Nothing good; no fear of there being anything in store for such an unlucky dog as I am."

"Where did she learn this wonderful black art of hers?"

"In the East, I believe. She has been there, and all over the world; and now visits England for the first time."

"She has chosen a sprightly season for her visit. Is she not afraid of the plague, I wonder?"

"No; she fears nothing," said Ormiston, as he knocked loudly at the door. "I begin to believe she is made of adamant instead of what other women are made of."

"Which is a rib, I believe," observed Sir Norman, thoughtfully. "And that accounts, I dare say, for their being of such a crooked and cantankerous nature. They're a wretched race, women are; and for what inscrutable reason it has pleased Providence to create them!"

The opening of the door brought to a sudden end this little touch of moralizing, and a wrinkled old porter thrust out a very withered and unlovely face.

"Is La Masque at home?" inquired Ormiston, stepping in, without ceremony.

The old man nodded, and pointed up-stairs; and with a "This way, Kingsley," Ormiston sprung lightly up, three at a time, followed in the same style by Sir Norman.

"You seem pretty well acquainted with the latitude and longitude of this place," observed that young gentleman, as they passed into a room at the head of the stairs.

"I ought to be; I've been here often enough," said Ormiston. "This is the common waiting-room for all who wish to consult La Masque. That old bag of bones who lets us in has gone to announce us."

Sir Norman took a seat, and glanced curiously round the room. It was a commonplace apartment enough, with a floor of polished black oak, slippery as ice, and shining like glass; a few old Flemish paintings on the walls; a large, round table in the center of the floor, on which lay a pair of the old musical instruments called "virginals." Two large, curtainless windows, with minute diamond-shaped panes, set in leaden casements, admitted the golden and crimson light.

"For the reception-room of a sorceress," remarked Sir Norman, with an air of disappointed criticism, "there is nothing very wonderful about all this. How is it she spares fortunes, anyway? As Lily does by maps and charts, or as these old Eastern mafis do it by magic mirrors and all such fooleries?"

"Neither," said Ormiston; "her style is more like that of the Indian almeches, who show you your destiny in a shell. She has a sort of magic lake in her room, and—but you will see it all for yourself presently."

"I have always heard," said Sir Norman, in the same meditative way, "that truth lies at the bottom of a well, and I am glad some one has turned up at last who is able to find it out. Ah! Here comes our ancient Mercury to show us to the presence of your goddess."

The door opened, and the "old bag of bones," as Ormiston irreverently styled his lady-love's ancient domestic, made sign for them to follow him. Leading the way down a long corridor, he flung open a pair of shining folding-doors at the end, and ushered them at once into the majestic presence of the sorceress and her magic room. Both gentlemen doffed their plumed hats. Ormiston stepped forward at once; but Sir Norman discreetly paused in the doorway to contemplate the scene of action. As he slowly did so, a look of deep displeasure settled on his features, on finding it not half so awful as he had supposed.

In some ways it was very like the room they had left, being low, large and square, and having floors, walls and ceiling panelled with glossy black oak. But it had no windows—a large bronze lamp, suspended from the center of the ceiling, shed a flickering, ghostly light. There were no paintings—some grim carvings of skulls, skeletons, and serpents, pleasantly wreathed the room—neither were there seats nor tables—noting but a huge ebony caldron at the upper end of the apartment, over which a grinning skeleton on wires, with a scythe in one hand of bone, and an hour-glass in the other, kept watch and ward. Opposite this cheerful-looking guardian was a tall figure in black, standing as motionless as if it, too, was carved in ebony. It was a female figure, very tall and slim, but as beautifully symmetrical as a Venus Celestis. Her dress was of black velvet, that swept the polished floor, spangled all over with stars of gold and rich rubies. A profusion of shining black hair fell in waves and curls almost to her feet; but her face, from forehead to chin, was completely hidden by a black velvet mask. In one hand, exquisitely small and white, she held a gold casket, blazing (like her dress) with rubies, and with the other she toyed with a tame viper, that had twined itself round her wrist. This was doubtless La Masque, and becoming conscious of that fact, Sir Norman made her a low and courtly bow. She returned it by a slight bend of the head, and turning toward his companion, spoke:

"You here again, Mr. Ormiston! To what am I indebted for the honor of two visits in two days?"

Her voice, Sir Norman thought, was the sweetest he had ever heard, musical as a chime of silver bells, soft as the tones of an aeolian harp through which the west wind plays.

"Madam, I am aware my visits are undesired," said Ormiston, with a flushing cheek and slightly tremulous voice; "but I have merely come with my friend, Sir Norman Kingsley, who wishes to know what the future has in store for him."

Thus invoked, Sir Norman Kingsley stepped forward, with another low bow, to the masked lady.

"Yes, madam, I have long heard that those fair fingers can withdraw the curtain of the future, and I have come to see what Dame Destiny is going to do for me."

"Sir Norman Kingsley is welcome," said the sweet voice, "and shall see what he desires. There is but one condition, that he will keep

perfectly silent; for if he speaks, the scene he beholds will vanish. Come forward!"

Sir Norman compressed his lips as closely as if they were forever hermetically sealed, and came forward accordingly. Leaning over the edge of the ebony caldron, he found that it contained nothing more dreadful than water, for he labored under a vague and unpleasant idea that, like the witches' caldron in Macbeth, it might be filled with sorcerers' blood and children's brains. La Masque opened her golden casket, and took from it a portion of red powder, with which it was filled. Casting it into the caldron, she murmured an invocation in Tongue, or Coptic, or some other unknown tongue, and slowly there arose a dense cloud of dark-red smoke, that nearly filled the room.

Had Sir Norman ever read the story of Aladdin, he would probably have thought of it then; but the young courier did not greatly affect literature of any kind, and thought of nothing now but of seeing something when the smoke cleared away. It was rather long in doing so, and when it did, he saw nothing at last but his own handsome, half-serious, half-incredulous face; but gradually a picture, distinct and clear, formed itself at the bottom, and Sir Norman gazed with bewildered eyes. He saw a large room filled with a sparkling crowd, many of those ladies, splendidly arrayed and flashing in jewels, and foremost among them stood one whose beauty surpassed anything he had ever before dreamed of. She wore the robes of a queen, purple and ermine—diamonds blazed on the beautiful neck, arms and fingers, and a tiara of the same brilliants crowned her regal head. In one hand she held a scepter; what seemed to be a throne was behind her, but something that surprised Sir Norman most of all was, to find himself standing beside her, the cynosure of all eyes. While he yet gazed in mingled astonishment and incredulity, the scene faded away, and another took its place. This time a dungeon-cell, damp and dismal; walls, floor, and ceiling covered with green and hideous slime. A small lamp stood on the floor, and by its sickly, watery gleam, he saw himself again standing, pale and dejected, near the wall. But he was not alone; the same glittering vision in purple and diamonds stood before him, and suddenly he drew his sword and plunged it up to his heart! The beautiful vision fell like a stone at his feet, and the sword was drawn out reeking with her life-blood. This was a little too much for the real Sir Norman, and with an expression of indignant consternation, he sprang upright. Instantly it all faded away, and the reflection of his own excited face looked up at him from the caldron.

"I told you not to speak," said La Masque, quietly; "but you must look on still another scene."

Again she threw a portion of the contents of the casket into the caldron, and "spake aloud the words of power." Another cloud of smoke arose and filled the room, and when it cleared away, Sir Norman beheld a third and less startling sight. The scene and place he could not discover, but it seemed to him like night and a storm. Two men were lying on the ground, and bound fast together, it appeared to him. As he looked it faded away, and once more his own face seemed to mock him in the clear water.

"Do you know those two last figures?" asked the lady.

"I do," said Sir Norman, promptly; "it was Ormiston and myself."

"Right! and one of them was dead."

"Dead!" exclaimed Sir Norman, with a peremptory start. "Which one, madam?"

"If you cannot tell that, neither can I. If there is anything further you wish to see, I am quite willing to show it to you."

"I'm obliged to you," said Sir Norman, stepping back; "but no more at present, thank you. Do you mean to say, madam, that I'm some day to murder a lady, especially one so beautiful as she I just now saw?"

"Great Heaven! what a beautiful face!" was his cry, as he bent still further down.

"What the plague is the matter?" asked Sir Norman, coming forward.

"You have said it," said Ormiston, recoiling. "The plague is the matter. There lies one dead of it!"

Curiosity proving stronger than fear, Sir Norman stepped forward to look at the corpse. It was a young girl with a face as lovely as a poet's vision. That face was like snow, now; and, in its calm, cold majesty, looked as exquisitely perfect as some ancient Grecian statue. The low, pearl-brown, the sweet, beautiful lips, the delicate oval outline of countenance, were perfect. The eyes were closed, and the long dark lashes rested on the ivory cheeks. A profusion of shining dark hair fell in elaborate coils over her neck and shoulders. Her dress was that of a bride; a robe of white satin brocaded with silver, fairly dazzling in its shining radiance, and as brief in the article of sleeves and neck as that of any modern belle.

A circlet of pearls were clasped round the snow-white throat, and bracelets of the same jewels encircled the snowy taper arms. On her head she wore a bridal wreath and veil—the former of jewels, the latter falling round her like a cloud of mist. Everything was perfect, from the wreath and veil to the tiny sandaled feet; and lying there in her mute repose she looked more like some exquisite piece of sculpture than anything that had ever lived and moved in this groveling world of ours. But from one shoulder the dress had been pulled down, and there lay a great livid, purple plague-spot!

"Come away!" said Ormiston, catching his companion by the arm. "It is death to remain here!"

Sir Norman had been standing like one in a trance, from which this address roused him, and he grasped Ormiston's shoulder almost frantically.

"Look there, Ormiston! There lies the very face that sorceress showed me, fifteen minutes ago, in her infernal caldron! I would know it at the other end of the world!"

"Are you sure?" said Ormiston, glancing again with new curiosity at the marble face. "I never saw anything half so beautiful in all my life; but you see she is dead of the plague."

"Dead? Oh, she cannot be! Nothing so perfect could die!"

"Look there," said Ormiston, pointing to the plague-spot. "There is the fatal token! For Heaven's sake let me go out of this, or we will share the same fate before morning!"

But Sir Norman did not move—could not move; he stood there rooted to the spot by the spell of that lovely, lifeless face.

Usually the plague left its victims hideous, ghastly, discolored, and covered with blotches; but in this case there was nothing to mar the perfect beauty of the satin-smooth skin, but that one dreadful mark.

There Sir Norman stood in his trance, as motionless as if some genii out of the "Arabian Nights" had suddenly turned him into stone (a trick they were much addicted to), and destined him to remain there an ornamental fixture for ever. Ormiston looked at him distractedly, uncertain whether to try moral suasion or to take him by the collar and drag him headlong down the stairs, when providential but rather dismal circumstance came to his relief. A cart rattling along the street, a bell was loudly rung, and a hoarse voice arose with it:

"Bring out your dead! bring out your dead!"

"I don't believe it myself," said Ormiston, with a desperate face; "but until the plague carries me off, I cannot give her up; and the sooner that happens the better. Ha! what is this?"

It was a piercing shriek—no unusual sound; as he spoke, the door of an adjoining house was flung open, a woman rushed wildly out, fled down an adjoining street, and disappeared.

Sir Norman and his companion looked at each other, and then at the house.

"What's all this about?" demanded Ormiston.

"That's a question I can't take it upon myself to answer," said Sir Norman; "and the only way to solve the mystery is, to go in and see."

"It may be the plague," said Ormiston, hesitating. "Yet the house is not marked. There is a watchman. I will ask him."

The man with the halberd in his hand was walking up and down before an adjoining house, bearing the ominous red cross and piteous inscription: "Lord have mercy on us!"

"I don't know, sir," was his answer to Ormiston. "If any one there has the plague, you must have taken it lately; for I heard this morning there was to be a wedding there to-night."

"I never heard of any one screaming in that fashion about a wedding," said Ormiston, doubtfully. "Do you know who lives there?"

"No, sir. I only came here, myself, yesterday, but two or three times to-day I have seen a very beautiful young lady looking out of the window."

Ormiston thanked the man, and went back to report to his friend.

"A beautiful young lady!" said Sir Norman, with energy. "Then I mean to go directly up and see about it, and you can follow or not, just as you please."

"Oft if you are determined, I will go with you, of course; but it is the craziest freak I ever heard of. After this, you need never laugh at me."

"I never will," said Sir Norman, moodily; "for if you love a face you have never seen, I love one I have only looked on when dead. Does it not seem sacrilege to throw any one so like an angel into that horrible plague-pit?"

"I never saw an angel," said Ormiston, as he and his friend started to go after the dead-cart. "And I dare say there have been scores as beautiful as that poor girl thrown into the plague-pit before now. I wonder why the house has been deserted, and if she was really a bride. The bridegroom could not have loved her much. I fancy, or not even the pestilence could have scared him away."

"But, Ormiston, what an extraordinary thing it is that it should be precisely the same face that the fortune-teller showed me! There she was alive, and here she is dead; so I've lost all faith in La Masque forever."

Ormiston looked doubtful.

"Are you quite sure it is the same, Kingsley?"

"Quite sure!" said Sir Norman, indignantly. "Of course I am! Do you think I could be mistaken in such a case? I tell you I would know the face in Kamschatka or the North Pole; for I don't believe there ever was such another created."

"So be it, then! Your object, of course, in following that cart is to take a last look at her?"

"Precisely so. Don't talk; I feel in no mood for it just at present."

Ormiston smiled to himself, and did not talk, accordingly; and in silence the two friends followed the gloomy dead-cart. A faint yellow moon, pale and sickly, was struggling dimly through drifts of dark clouds, and lighted the lonesome, dreary streets with a wan, watery glimmer. For weeks the weather had been brilliantly fine—the days all sunshine, the nights all moonlight; but now Ormiston, looking up at the troubled face of the sky, concluded mentally that the Lord Mayor had selected an unpropitious night for the grand illumination. Sir Norman, with his eyes on the pest-cart and the long white figure therein, took no heed of anything in the heaven above or earth beneath, and strode along the darkening surface, could be seen protruding a fair white arm, or a bare face, mingled with the long, dark tresses of maidens, the golden curly hair of children, and the white hairs of old age. The pestilential effluvia arising from the dreadful mass was so overpowering that both shrunk back, faint and sick, after a moment's survey. It was indeed, as Sir Norman had said, a horrible grave wherein to lie.

Meantime the driver, with an eye to business, and no time for such nonsense as melancholy moralizing, had laid the body of the young girl on the ground, and briskly turned his cart and dumped the remainder of his load into the pit. Then, having flung a few handfuls of clay over it, he unwound the sheet, and kneeling beside the body, prepared to remove the jewels. The rays of the moon and his dark-lantern fell on the lovely, snow-white face together, and Sir Norman groaned despairingly as he saw its death-cold rigidity. The man had stripped the rings off the fingers, the bracelets off the arms; but as he was about to perform the same operation toward the necklace, he was stopped by a startling interruption enough. In his haste, the clasp entered the beautiful neck, inflicting a deep scratch from which the blood spouted; and at the same instant the dead girl opened her eyes, with a shrill cry. Uttering a yell of terror, as well he might, the man sprang back and gazed at her with horror, believing that his sacrilegious robbery had brought the dead to life. Even the two young men—albeit neither of them given to nervousness or cowardice—recoiled for an instant and stared aghast. Then, having struck them, that the girl had been in a deep swoon and not dead, both simultaneously darted forward, and forgetting all fear of infection, knelt by her side. A pair of great, lustrous black eyes were staring wildly around, and fixed themselves first on one face and then on the other.

"Where am I?" she exclaimed, with a terrified look, as she strove to raise herself on her elbow, and fled instantaneously back with a cry of agony, as she felt for the first time the throbbing anguish of the wound.

"You are with friends, dear lady!" said Sir Norman, in a voice quite tremulous between astonishment and delight. "Fear nothing, for you shall be saved."

The great black eyes turned wildly upon him, while a fierce spasm convulsed the beautiful face.

"Oh, my God, I remember! I have the plague!" And, with a prolonged shriek of anguish, that thrilled even to the hardened heart of the dead-cart driver, the girl fell back senseless again.

Sir Norman Kingsley sprung to his feet, and with more the air of a frantic lunatic than a responsible young English knight, caught the cold form in his arms, laid it in the dead-cart, and was about springing into the driver's seat, when that individual indignantly interposed.

"Come, now; none of that! If you were the king at all, you shouldn't run away with my cart in that fashion; so you just get out of my place as fast as you can!"

"My dear Kingsley, what are you about to do?" asked Ormiston, catching his excited friend by the arm.

"Do!" exclaimed Sir Norman, in a high key.

THE SATURDAY JOURNAL

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HEADLE AND ADAMS, PUBLISHERS,
88 WILLIAM ST., NEW YORK.

THE STORY BEAUTIFUL!

In hand, and soon to run through the columns of the SATURDAY JOURNAL—

BLACK EYES AND BLUE;

OR,

The Peril of Beauty and the Power of Purity.

A TALE OF COUNTRY AND CITY.

BY CORINNE CUSHMAN.

A most enchanting and absorbing story of two half-sisters—village belles—who, by a startling episode, drift apart to fates that test womanhood like metal in the crucible. Young women and young men have a strongly drawn portraiture, and city life, as an ambitious and almost desperate country girl sees it, has an exciting and impressive delineation. The contrasts between beauty and purity—black eyes and blue—city and country—offer a rapid succession of very peculiar incidents and situations which betray both the art and the power of the true author. It is, in more than one respect, the finest serial story that has appeared in the popular weekly press for a long time.

Sunshine Papers.

His Chapter of Experience.

"GOING in the country, to live? My dear fellow, have you ever tried it? Not? Then let me give you a chapter of my experience."

And he put his morning paper upon his knees and his facial expression would have made the fortune of any artist who could have reproduced it as that of Dives returned from Hades, to warn his brethren against settling there.

"We had lived in town most of our lives, Mrs. Tritkins and I," he proceeded to say, "but we were fond of the country, and believed it the best place in which to bring up children, and that we could live there more economically than in the city; and as we had kept our establishment in a modest way, and had saved enough money to invest in a little home, we decided it should be a cozy little nest among green trees and babbling brooks. We talked of the matter day and night; my cigar bill really decreased during those weeks; the only use I made of my dailies was to search real estate columns; I dwelt with delight upon the plethora that should affect my bank account; I omitted reproving Charles Henry when Mrs. Tritkins overheard him using slang and punishing John Samuel when he told me a lie, because the youngsters would soon improve in the healthful moral atmosphere of the country; I smiled benignly upon Mrs. Tritkins when she grew eloquent over the table she should set—always loaded with choice, fresh fruits and vegetables—and waxed joyful over the decrease of work that would take place in regard to the cherubs' wardrobes; I harangued all my friends upon the wisdom of my example until I've often wondered why I did not understand sooner my falling off of custom that spring; and if I had succeeded in converting every one to my way of thinking the population of the city would have been reduced to recluse old bachelors and antediluvian schoolmarmes."

"Three cars conveyed our household effects to the regions of the blessed. We left nothing behind, for we should never return. To the country went marble slabs and gas fixtures, carpets three sizes too large for the largest room in our new home, pier-glass and cornices, stacks of old crinoline and boxes of seedy shoes. Everything would be of some use in the country. And, finally, we were deposited—bootjacks, bonnet-boxes, children, tinware—And, by Jove! sir, you never saw a house that needed such cleaning and repairing! For weeks we lived in a depressing atmosphere of soap-suds and lime, while our nerves were well-nigh ruined by the ripping, cutting and pounding processes that carpe's shades and furniture had to undergo before they would agree with their new scenes of duty. But that did end at last, though it seemed as if the influx of bills never would—for cartage, freightage, cleaning, carpentering, painting, gardening—nor the ingress of new servants; although Mrs. Tritkins insists that we did not try over six weeks for five weeks, and one week for the next eighteen months. She is such a conscientious woman her version must be correct."

"Well, my dear man, the bliss of that life cannot be equal'd outside of purgatory—making some little allowance for there being such a place! I reached my country home early at eight o'clock, ate my country supper at nine, tumbled into my country bed at ten, and enjoyed country music until eleven—a full chorus! Frogs sung bass (spelled as pronounced) locusts did the tenor, (but ten or even fifty doesn't express their numbers) katydids chanted the alto, and musketoes never tired of assuming the soprano parts. The alarm clock aroused me punctually at five A. M., and the red-letter days were when I succeeded in getting a bite of toast before sailing for the train. To my agonies were added my wife's distress that the children were growing wild, rough, and vulgar; the boys came home with clothes redolent of dust, besmeared with mud, torn in a dozen places; the girls climbed fences and trees, tore the dresses off all their backs, and talked in dialect. Vegetables were more difficult to obtain than in the city and fruit cost double. Marketing was inconvenient, and all provisions were astonishingly high-priced. If it rained the roads were all mud, if it did not rain when you put your foot down in the dust you wondered what part of China it came in close contact with. If we did not make calls we were

reported 'stuck up' when we paid visits we were 'all the time gadding.' We could not make our lives exemplary enough to suit our neighbors; and they knew much more about our private affairs than we did ourselves."

"We tried it over two summers, and then we just 'got up and got it.' The second summer I had my own garden and gardener, and kept a horse that I might save my half-mile walk to and from the station and that wife might get more air; and I came back to town in debt, with a jaded-out wife, wild children who were scarcely in a higher class in street grammar school than when they left it, and myself a victim to the vilest twinges of rheumatism and dyspepsia!"

"That was eight years ago, my boy; and Mrs. Tritkins and I have never yet so far recovered from the demoralization of that experiment as to be able to hear a person urge the wisdom of living out of town without feeling a desire to consign that wretched individual to regions of perpetual summer in a far country. Oh! be warned, be warned, sir, in time! A divided existence is not conducive to a man's well-being! If you must be here at your work, stick to it; and let the country suffice for a summer play-place, is my advice!"

And I came straight home and wrote down the chapter of his experience—for you!

A FARSON'S DAUGHTER.

MISTAKES.

MISTAKES will happen in spite of all our endeavors to prevent them. Yet many a mistake might be prevented were we to endeavor a little more not to have them occur.

It is a grave mistake to bring up a child with such strictness and severity as to cause the poor creature to have no comfort in its home, and to think any place far preferable to it. I know of a case where the discipline of a household was so strict as to cause fear to take the place of love in the feelings of the children toward their parents, and when one or two of these children went astray, after they had grown up, the parents should have felt how grave a mistake they had made in keeping so tight a check-rein upon them. They may have thought they were doing their "duty" by their offspring, but is it a parent's duty to crush out all sunshine and pleasure in the hearts of their children—to forbid them reading good books? Is it a parent's duty to make Sunday a bugbear to the household—to allow no smile to appear on any of the countenances—to cast a funeral gloom over the premises, until one hates the very day to come? I once heard one of these over-particular beings tell his son that it would always be Sunday in heaven, and I didn't wonder that his little hopeful replied that he "didn't want to go there then, for he could not sit still all the time as he was obliged to be once a week."

It is a grave mistake to imagine that we are doing others as we would have others do unto us, when we are so prone to comment on the short-comings of those whom we have about us, and say evil things behind their backs that we would never dare to say before their faces. To murder them with unkind words and cruel actions—to allow others to suppose they are worse than they actually are—to put stones in their way for them to trip over—to see others being wrecked in the sea of dissipation and drunkenness and stretch forth no hand to save them, but to let them drown before our very eyes and we wall on, thanking God we are not as others are, and feeling free from all blame, when we know we are sinning by not endeavoring to save others from going to destruction.

It is a grave mistake for us to make believe we do not care for the slights put upon us—that we have a contempt for those who are poorer or not so well born as we happen to be, because the rich cannot live without the poor, and the poor cannot live without the rich, each are dependent upon the other. It is work of the poor that fills the coffers of the rich, and it is the rich man's money that gives life to the poor.

It is a sad mistake to think many of us can exist without doing something for our support—that the world owes us a living, and we shall have payment for doing nothing. Thus it is that so many value their situations so little; yet, when the panic comes, and times are hard, there are tens of thousands in the receipt of good salaries are discharged, and wander from store to store, willing to do anything for ever so little, so that they and those near and dear ones who are dependent upon them for support, shall not starve. This is the time when one discovers that the idea of sitting still and doing nothing is not the way to make the world pay the living it owes. Some of these wanderers who search for work have discovered it to be a mistake to have lived so extravagantly, when business was good and not put by anything for the inevitable "rainy day," so often overtakes the best. A little saved here and there will soon tell, and when the rainy days come a well filled pocket-book is a pretty good umbrella. There is no mistake about that.

It is a strange mistake many persons make in supposing they are reconciling hearts that are drifting away from each other by opening the old sores and letting them bleed afresh by repeating to them every bit of gossip and scandal that is floating around. That is no way to keep lovers and their betrothed, husbands and wives together. They are poor comforters who are prone to do so, and the sooner they are brought to their senses and see the matter in the true light, the less divorce will there be and the more happy homes will abound. It doesn't seem to me as though any one could have harsh feelings after reading Will Carleton's lines:

"So I think you had better be kind,
And I had best be true;
And let the old love go on;
Just as it used to do."

EVE LAWLESS.

The following extract from a letter to us from Dayton, Ohio, makes so good a "point" it may be permitted to quote:

"I have been a reader of your paper for nearly four years, and I think it one of the best papers of its kind published in the country. I have always been taught to abhor fiction, in whatever shape, and I always held aloof from it until I got your paper, when I found that as compared with the daily papers, it was chaste as snow. The 'patriotic' and 'dark and soiled' parts of the paper are bad, but with that species of vigor that the Evil Genius betrays in making his eau de god. I am so sick of them all and have been, and turned to your paper as a change, and I find what I now see is the only paper in the home circle, for it is bold, sparkling, entertaining and instructive; it gratifies pain and satisfies the taste for good reading, of a varied character, and I can only say I wish every household in the land could see it come within its doors."

We hope by continuing to maintain its standard and adding constantly to its attractions, to see the SATURDAY JOURNAL in every household where the weekly paper finds a welcome. These dull times are telling severely on some of the weeklies, but we are most happy to say, our lists are constantly growing—our readers increasing, week by week.

Foolscap Papers.

Letter from the Black Hills.

The Black Hills gold fever suddenly took me with both hands, and I instantly began to make preparations for the trip, although my wife told me the Indians would kill me on the way, and she knew much more about our private affairs than we did ourselves.

"We tried it over two summers, and then we just 'got up and got it.' The second summer I had my own garden and gardener, and kept a horse that I might save my half-mile walk to and from the station and that wife might get more air; and I came back to town in debt,

with a jaded-out wife, wild children who were scarcely in a higher class in street grammar school than when they left it, and myself a victim to the vilest twinges of rheumatism and dyspepsia!"

I went out in the lot and shoveled gravel two hours every morning for the purpose of getting used to it. I got used to it very fast. I soon so got used to it that I could shovel as much as I wanted to.

Knowing that provisions would be scarce there, I tried to accustom myself to doing without fresh bread three times a day, and succeeded, but it was at a terrible expense for other victuals.

Jones took the fever in the same region that I did, and we both began to school ourselves together for the trip. We took long journeys on foot, often going around three or four squares to get used to walking, without stopping to rest more than two or three times, carrying packs, and wearing slouched hats, and our pants in our boots.

We practiced with guns in our yard at an Indian chalked on the stable door, knowing that we would be likely to have plenty of that kind of diversion on the route, and sometimes when Jones would aim the gun and I would pull the trigger we came near hitting it—we would have hit it often if it had been a real Indian and it had jumped a little aside, as Indians will do when they see the flash of a rifle in their direction.

When we got ready to start, a great many went to the depot to see us start. All our creditors were there, and every one prayed for our success in the most earnest manner.

We left the Pacific railroad at Cheyenne, and started at once for the Hills on foot, carrying our provisions along, but we had none to sell. We had each a pair of steel-yards to weigh chunks of gold, and a big blank-book to put the weight down in. These books would hold a great many figures—more than you could imagine.

We had revolvers strapped all about us, and each carried a double-barreled rifle of us. It was a great bore to carry them.

We met no one going, but a great number coming back. They all said they were coming in to get wagons to go back after the gold they had dug.

One night the Indians attacked us. We threw ourselves into a solid square and received them with a discharge of open arms. The battle lasted three hours. Jones was shot in the shoulder—of meat which he carried on his back. I received two shots in the side—of bacon which I carried in my pack. Jones then cut his handkerchief to a stick and raised it as a flag of truce, but the Indians mistaking it for the black flag, charged once again, during which Jones received a painful shot in the leg—of dried venison, and I a minie-ball in the back—of a book on Indian etiquette. But we had to surrender at indiscretion. However, when they took our hats off and found us both to be bald-headed, they uttered a cry of dismay, and said some other Indians had scalped us before they met us, and walked away, scratching their heads, and were soon lost in the dimness of distance.

One of the most serious accidents occurred to us as we were crossing a stream on a log. The log rolled over and we went under. Three times we sunk, and it looked like it was all over, or under, with us; we were about gone, when Jones caught me by the collar, and I caught him by the collar, and we dragged each other to the shore; there, by the most heroic exertions in working with each other, we brought each other to, and the heartfelt thanks we lavished on each other were many in the extreme. It came near being one of the most serious losses to us that we had ever sustained.

Had we been killed by the Indians it would have been a frightful death in more senses than two.

After six weeks' hardships we reached the Black Hills, which were white to us, indeed, and went to digging without waiting to put on clean clothes or blacking our boots.

Ever since we have been having the most wonderful success. We began to dig up American gold coins in abundance. The Indians have long been known to have used these hills as a place of deposit for gold, and the unlooted riches which are buried here have never been whispered. Jones was seriously injured on the first day by a chunk of gold becoming detached from the cliff above and falling on his head: his head having been made soft by the rains, that prevented him from being killed or otherwise injured for life.

The amount of each day's work is carried to our shanty, and then buried, as transportation is very scarce.

We have daily fights with the Indians, who are on us paying one dollar, twelve and a half cents for all the gold we dig, which of course we refuse to do.

We are so tired of gold that it would be some little relief if we should strike a vein of lead, and have more of it on hand would satisfy even the demands of our most avaricious creditors.

We would have started home long ago had it not been for circumstances.

Will you be kind enough to send us fifty dollars in greenbacks, as soon as you get this letter? It would be a great convenience at present.

Signed, WASHINGTON WHITEHORN,

And, SMITH JONES, Black Hills.

P. S. We must say there is a great deal of gold washed here. It is all washed.

"DIED YESTERDAY."—Who died? Perhaps it was a gentle babe sinless as an angel, pure as the zephyr's hymn—one whose laugh was as the gush of summer rills, loitering in a bower of roses—whose little life was a perpetual Maytime crowned with the passion flowers that never fade. Or, maybe, it was a youth—hopeful and generous—one whose parents had taught him to abhor fiction, in whatever shape, and I always held aloof from it until I got your paper, when I found that as compared with the daily papers, it was chaste as snow. The "patriotic" and "dark and soiled" parts of the paper are bad, but with that species of vigor that the Evil Genius betrays in making his eau de god. I am so sick of them all and have been, and turned to your paper as a change, and I find what I now see is the only paper in the home circle, for it is bold, sparkling, entertaining and instructive; it gratifies pain and satisfies the taste for good reading, of a varied character, and I can only say I wish every household in the land could see it come within its doors."

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THOUGHTS come into our minds by avenues which we never left open, and thoughts go out of our minds through avenues which we never voluntarily opened.

Topics of the Time.

Foolscap Papers.

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IN JUNETIME.

BY EBEN E. REXFORD.

Under the trees in the Junetime I lie,
And we whisper together, sweet Nature and I.
Over my head, in the wide azure arch,
I see the cloud-armies go out on a march.

Here is a straggler, and there a recruit,
Both clad in the white of the cloud-soldier's suit.
I see, flying up from the green earth below,
A messenger-bird, who bears tidings, I know,
To the sentinel clouds who are watching the
world.
From the crags where the flags of the sky are
unfurled.

The wind whispers softly a secret to me;
It has seen the first rose of June kissed by a bee!
And it says that the violets blow on the hills,
Where the air is astir with the ripple of rills,

And the song of the robin, and carol of wren.
Who are happy to-day with the children of men.

I hear the roots growing, all hidden away,
When I lie down and listen, this happy June
day.

I see in the grass, where the brown crickets hide
Rehearsing a concert for eventide.

I would be a bird to fly up and away,
And beat my wings at the gates of day.

I would be a cloud to go floating far,
And bask in the smile of the Evening Star.

I would be a wind from the passionate south,
Sweet as a kiss from a dainty mouth.

I would be a bœuf to woo the rose
Till its fragrant heart to my lips uncloses.

But were I a blossom, a bird, or bee,
What would my love do for loss of me?

Without a Heart:
WALKING ON THE BRINK.

A STORY OF LIFE'S SUNSHINE AND SHADOW.

BY COLONEL PRENTISS INGRAHAM,
AUTHOR OF "GIVEN FOR GOLD," "THE FLYING YANKEE," "THE MEXICAN SPY,"
"TRACKED THROUGH LIFE."

CHAPTER XVIII.

WILDWILDE.

UPON the sea-washed shore of a sunny southern State was Wildwilde, the new home of Colonel Erskine.

A more beautiful home heart could not desire, for the villa was a handsome, commodious structure, with deep bay-windows and broad piazzas, and from its front and east wing a broad view of the ocean could be obtained with jutting points and wooded isles up and down the coast.

Around the mansion, to the south and west, were a lovely lawn and flower-garden, while to the northward ranged an extensive park of lordly trees, through which bounded a number of graceful deer, led by a fleet-footed monarch of the forest, with large spreading antlers and nimble feet.

Back of the mansion, at some distance, were the stable and out-houses, built upon a similar plan to the house, and a quarter of a mile away, forming a crescent around the white beach of a small bay; were a score of neat-looking cottages, "the quarters" of the servants of Wildwilde.

A fountain here and there, a piece of marble statuary, white shell walks, flower-bespangled beds, and rolling lawns of velvet grass, with the constantly-changing ocean scenery, rendered the surroundings of Wildwilde beautiful indeed, while Gothic and rustic summer-houses invited loungers into their cool and quiet retreats.

Running out into the water, some fifty feet, was a neat pier, with a small arbor upon the end, and here there were arranged comfortable seats, for those who cared to watch the restless waters coming in from the sea beyond.

Around the pier, gently rising and falling upon the waters, were a small pleasure-yacht and several gayly painted row-boats, with velvet cushions and striped awnings, which rendered them most comfortable.

Entering the grand and massive looking mansion, on every side was luxury, and everywhere an air of comfort prevailed, from the broad hallway to the spacious parlors, inviting library, and cool and extensive dining-room.

Up-stairs were the sleeping chambers, large, convenient, luxuriously furnished, and sufficient in number to accommodate a score of guests, for the former master of Wildwilde was a genial and hospitable host—far too much so for his own good.

In the library, lolling back in an easy chair, and gazing listlessly, and yet admiringly, out over the quiet waters of the little bay, and out upon the restless waves of the sea beyond, was the new lord and master of Wildwilde, Colonel Erskine.

In the large bow-window, an open book upon her lap, sat a maiden.

So completely metamorphosed was Everard Ainslie, from a handsome, graceful youth of twenty, apparently, into a lovely, brilliant maiden of eighteen, that none would have recognized her.

Dressed in a morning-robe of white lawn, that fitted her elegant form to perfection, and with her massive braids of hair fastened with a silver comb in one coil at the back of her haughty head, Eve Ainslie was indeed a wonderfully lovely woman—one that few men could gaze upon unmoved by her charms.

Upon her quiet features there was no ruffle of discontent—no footprints of an embittered life—no sign that her life was a lie—her face was an impenetrable mask.

She had cast the die—she had made a false confession, and her words had been believed by those who loved her.

By the falsehood she had gained a lovely home, a kind father, a loving brother—and wealth.

But would she not have gained all these had she been sincere in her confession—had she told the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

Such would the "still, small voice" of her conscience sometimes ask her, and she had to admit, knowing as she did both Colonel Erskine and his noble son, that their kindness toward her would have been the same, even though she was a deserted wife.

But then it was not politic for Eve to have it known that she was otherwise than she had said she was, for she was playing for a higher game than she had so far won—a game, to gain which, she would have to break the laws of God and man; but what cared a woman *without* heart for these?

For several weeks had Colonel Erskine and Eve been in their new home, enjoying to their heart's content the balmy air of the South, the perfume of the innumerable flowers, the sweet trilling of feathered songsters, gliding over the rippling waters, and indulging in literary and musical feasts in the library and music-room.

So calmly, so softly, did the days glide away in this Eden-like home; so loving, so kind, was Eve, that Colonel Erskine almost ceased to

mourn for poor Florice, for his newly-adopted daughter proved to him all that he could wish, and he thanked God for the day when she crossed his path, for to her he owed it that his days, gliding toward the grave, were not passed in gloom and despair.

CHAPTER XIX.

LA BELLE COQUETTE.

As the days glided by at Wildwilde the neighboring families called upon the new-comers, and Colonel Erskine and Eve soon found themselves as general favorites.

This was just what Eve most desired, for she was anxious to prove still further the power she felt that she possessed over men; but, with Colonel Erskine it was different, for he had been happy in the dreamy life he had led for a few weeks after his arrival at Wildwilde.

Still he was a most hospitable host, and was fond of company, and therefore greeted all visitors in his genial, kindly manner.

As the beau of the surrounding country began to flock around her, Eve Ainslie launched forth upon the fathomless sea of coquetry, and day after day threw her chains of love's bondage around some new admirer, holding him as she had held all others, her very slave.

With her triumph her joy and her ambition arose—joy that she could lay her hand upon the mane of any one of society's lions and cause him to kneel at her feet, and ambition to still further ascend the grade of victory, that when Clarence Erskine came to Wildwilde, upon his promised visit, he would find her a queen over all, and one who held full sway over men and women alike.

Quickly through the land flew the news of her beauty, her wit, her scathing sarcasm, and everywhere were her splendid sarcasm, her superb voice, her skill as a musician, and other accomplishments discussed, while the name of La Belle Coquette was bestowed upon her by a gay bachelor planter, who had never been dazzled by the beauties of Europe, but had come home to be flirted with by an American girl.

But one of Eve's strong points in coquetry was never to make an enemy of a discarded lover, for, did she refuse his love, she made him feel that she really *needed* his friendship, and in this way she held her power over them still, and kept them fluttering around the flame of her beauty and wit like poor candle-flies, anxious, seemingly, to receive injury from so brilliant a destroyer.

The young bachelor, above referred to, lived alone on a superb estate, left him by his parents' death, ere he was of age.

Passing a number of years in Europe, Paul Launcelot had at last returned home, at the age of thirty, to re-take his wanderings, and a few months after his arrival Eve Ainslie had risen above the horizon of his life, and drawn him at once to her side, though many a fair maiden of the neighborhood had given up all idea of ever netting his obdurate heart, for he escaped all love-traps set for him.

When at last his heart was smitten, Paul Launcelot went by the board, for he became Eve Ainslie's very shadow.

At length the telling of the same old story, and the bachelor planter was—refused.

Yet so kindly, so affectionately, almost, did Eve refuse the proffer of the three treasures terribly sought after by many of her sex—his heart, his hand, and his fortune—that she attached him to her as her best friend, so she told him he should be, and with that honor Paul Launcelot was compelled to be content, and almost seemed so, while, in a quiet way, he enjoyed seeing other men singe their wings and flitter back wounded and mournful.

One bright morning, when the inmates of Wildwilde awoke, they saw a trim-looking vessel-of-war anchored out in the little bay, having made shelter there during the darkness of the preceding night.

On that vessel Eve Ainslie soon found two more admirers—the one Captain Burt Lambert, a dashing, handsome young sailor of twenty-six, and the commander of the rakish-looking revenue cutter Eagle—the other Howard Moulton, first lieutenant of the Eagle, and a step-brother of his captain, for the widower of Burt, when the latter was a mere boy of six, and the former ten years his senior.

As soon as breakfast was over, the morning after the arrival of the Eagle in the bay, Colonel Erskine had summoned his six negro sailors, and gone on board the cutter, where he was warmly welcomed by Captain Lambert, who informed him that he had been ordered to that part of the coast, to watch for certain illegal traffickers upon the seas.

From that day both Burt Lambert and Howard Moulton became constant visitors at Wildwilde, and before one week passed the brothers were desperately in love with Eve Ainslie, who almost seemed momentarily dazzled by the splendid appearance and glittering uniform of the handsome young sea captain, for her kindness toward him made many a brave heartache.

CHAPTER XX.

FACE TO FACE.

ONE pleasant afternoon, some weeks after the arrival of the Eagle in the little bay, Captain Burt Lambert was rowed to the pier at Wildwilde, and landing, sent his card in to Miss Erskine, for, at the urgent desire of her adopted father, Eve had dropped her own name of Ainslie.

Soon the maid in appeared, looking queenly in her dark-blue riding-habit and hat and plume, for she had made an engagement with the young captain for a gallop over the country.

Soon the horses were brought round, two of the finest in the Wildwilde stables, and mounting, away dashed the handsome couple, anxiously eyed from the library window by Colonel Erskine, for, though he admired the young commander exceedingly, he dreaded lest Eve should learn to love him, a result he prayed against most sincerely, for he had hoped that Clarence would love the maiden when he saw her metamorphosed from the youth whose life he had so ably defended from the merciless clutches of the o'er-led law.

Down a lovely road, heavily wooded upon one side by the dense firs, and containing a view of the bay and ocean upon the other, rode the officer and his fair companion, his face slightly clouded, her face bright, tinged with the excitement of her ride, and as serenely beautiful as though no storm-clouds of sorrow and trouble had swept over it.

Out upon the bosom of the bay, her delicate spars and rigging traced against the blue sky beyond, lay the Eagle at anchor, fully a league away.

Pointing toward his beautiful vessel, Captain Lambert said, with some enthusiasm:

"Miss Erskine, for years past I have known but one lady-love—my vessel."

"When a mere boy, a midshipman on a vessel-of-war cruising in foreign seas, I never felt

homesick, for I looked upon my ship as my home; and when I at length rose in rank, and was detached from the navy and ordered to the command of a revenue cutter, my little Eagle became my home and my love—my heart's dearest idol."

"It is strange that yourself and brother should both be on the same vessel," said Eve, quietly, as if desiring to draw the captain away from a tender subject.

"Yes; but I am glad it is so, for I love Howard dearly."

"You know that we are step-brothers, and that he is ten years my senior?"

"Yes, and I like Lieutenant Moulton exceedingly."

"I am glad to hear you say so, Miss Erskine, for poor Howard has had a rather unhappy life."

"Indeed! will you tell it me?"

"There is little to tell, excepting that he entered the navy at an early age, and was rising rapidly in his profession, when a quarrel with his superior officer ended in a duel, in which he fell by Howard's hands."

"I am glad to hear you say so, Miss Erskine, for poor Howard has had a rather unhappy life."

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"Thank you, Miss Erskine; I will bring back Eve to the Eden from

And was Tom well, sir? Was he still mindful of old Ben? And where was he, sir, when he gave you the message for me?"

The stranger started, but, after a moment's hesitation, replied:

"Tom was well, and always spoke of you with the warmest affection. When I saw him, some months ago, he was far away from this! But Tom has been fortunate, since he was here."

"Fortunate? And how, sir? I know he had good luck in some things, but to what do you refer?"

"He has had a good deal of money left him," replied the stranger, quietly, glancing at the old man.

"I'm glad, indeed, to hear it, sir," said Ben, promptly; "for if ever man deserved the smiles of heaven, Tom Worth was that man! Tell you the truth, Mr. Morton," and he drew his chair confidentially toward the richly-clad gentleman, "there was something strange about Tom—that boy of mine. He was wonderful book-learned, sir, and though he had thews of steel and muscles of iron, and a fist that could shiver an inch-thick oak plank, yet that hand, though he worked in the mine, was always so white, so fine, so like a *gentleman's*, sir, that I often thought, though I didn't say it, that Tom was not exactly what he seemed to be. And then, Mr. Morton, Tom was so gentle, so respectful, sir, to the women. And I tell you, sir, that such a man is a *true man*, and one as don't forget he has had a mother, sir!"

The stranger listened intently, his eyes fixed on the old man's face—those eyes wet still.

"You speak words of wisdom, my friend," he said in a low voice, one deeply enthusiastic from emotion, "and you are right—such men are true men."

"Yes, Mr. Morton; and Tom Worth was one of them! And then, too, in a rough-and-tumble, my stars, sir! he was a perfect lion, and—But do you know his story, sir? He had a little trouble hereabouts!"

The old man spoke cautiously.

"Yes," replied the stranger; "I know Tom Worth's story, every word, and I know, too, that Tom was innocent."

"Innocent? Of course he was! And he would be a brave man, as I have said more than once, who would contradict me! Though—though—truth be told, for a long time, Tom himself would not say whether or not he was."

"Perhaps he had his reasons," suggested Mr. Morton, softly.

"Of course, sir, of course!" was the reply. "That was Tom! Reasons for everything, and good ones! God be thanked that I have heard from him again!"

A silence of some minutes ensued, the stranger bending his head in thought, old Ben sitting with his eyes half closed, a pleasant smile spreading over his countenance as his mind, doubtlessly, was traveling back over the past. The old man was thinking of Tom Worth, and the other was thinking of—what?

Suddenly the old man broke the silence by saying:

"You have brought me news, Mr. Morton—good, glorious news for me, and the same for another!" and he glanced familiarly at the stranger, as if confiding a confidence.

Mr. Morton started; his face flushed slightly, and his mustached lip trembled. But he asked, quietly:

"What do you mean, Mr. Walford?"

"Why, sir, there can be no harm in telling you, for you are Tom's friend. Why, sir, Tom was a handsome lad, and he had, truly he told, a wondrous way with the women. And, sir—why Tom was in love, and in love with a rich man's daughter."

The old man paused.

Mr. Morton drew still nearer to the miner, his gaze fixed upon him earnestly, expectantly.

"Well, Mr. Walford?"

"And, sir, the girl—God bless her for a noble woman—loved Tom more than any plain, blunt words of mine can tell you, sir. And she would have married Tom in spite of everything had my boy stayed; but, poor thing, man's daughter."

The old man paused.

Mr. Morton was now showing signs of excitement. He placed his hand upon the old man's arm, and said, in a deep whisper:

"Yes, yes, Mr. Walford; what of this poor girl, who loved the humble Tom Worth of those days?"

"Why, sir, poor thing, she has almost grieved herself to death after him. In spite of all I could say and swear to her, she believes Tom is dead—was drowned, sir. Why—would you believe it—she has been wearing black for Tom for these two years past! Don't that show love, sir? Again I say, may God bless that woman!"

"Amen!" echoed Mr. Morton, and a tear dimmed his eye; nor did the turning of his head conceal his emotion from old Ben.

"And now, sir, the other part of your good news," said the miner, softly, "is that I can tell Miss Grace positively that Tom is *not* dead, and that perhaps, nay, I know it, sir; that, though he is rich now, yet he is true to her still!"

"Ay, my friend! True to the death!" said the stranger, somewhat vehemently—so much so, indeed, that old Ben glanced at him quickly.

"But," continued Mr. Morton, as he saw the effect of his words, "it will not do now to tell the—thin young lady of me. We will wait; I have my reasons."

"Of course, sir, of course. And I am so glad to hear from Tom; I'd almost be willing to die without ever more seeing old England if my eyes could fall on Tom. God grant it."

"You may see him yet, Mr. Walford, who knows?" said the stranger, quickly. "But, he continued, as if recollecting himself, 'I have with me a letter from Tom for you. Here it is,' and he drew it from his pocket and handed it over.

The old man took it with an air almost reverential; fondled it for a moment in his large hands, and gazed affectionately at the superscription.

"Yes, 'tis from Tom!" he muttered: "I know his writing—so clear, so strong and fine, like printing! But, sir, my old eyes are dim; read that letter for me. I would not miss a single word for ten dollars in gold! Read it, sir, for me. If you are a friend of Tom Worth, and I believe you are, there can be no secret in it from you. Read it, Mr. Morton; for, though your beard is white, your eyes—I know it—are younger and sharper than mine."

The stranger started at these words, and a smile flashed over his face; but, he took the letter, opened it, and spread out the sheet. As he did so, several bank-notes fell down. The stranger quietly picked them up and laid them on the table.

The old miner looked at the money, and then bowed his head.

"I will read Tom's letter if you are ready," said Mr. Morton, after a pause, in a low voice.

"Read, read on, sir," and the old man did not raise his head.

After another moment's hesitation, the stranger read in a steady, but subdued voice, as follows:

"DEAR BEN:

"God be thanked that I can write to you again, and tell you that I have not forgotten you! Though many long months have rolled by since we parted on the banks of the river, yet Ben you are still the dearest friend mine since I last saw you, suffered much, but through all I have remembered you, the only true friend I ever had! I am far away now, Ben—far away from you and our dear old cabin on the hillside where you and your 'boy' have passed so many happy, honest hours together."

The stranger's voice wavered; old Ben's glass frame shook like an aspen leaf.

"And, Ben, it may be," resumed the stranger, reading from the letter, "that we will never meet there. If such should be God's will, to be, Ben, my partner with me, that we may meet in the earth hereafter. I have inclosed to you, Ben, notes to the value of one hundred pounds—the money of your native land—old England, so dear to you. I can afford it. Take it, Ben; it comes a free gift from one who loves you more tenderly than any other. I cannot say 'ever' but I should be the dearest that we meet more on earth, do your whole part as a God-fearing man to meet me in the better land. May God bless you!"

For five minutes there was a complete silence; and then, as if fearing to speak, the minor slowly raised his tear-bedewed face.

"I'll do it, Tom! I'll do it!" he whispered, in a deep tone, as if addressing the shade of his absent friend. "Trust me, Tom, for, with God's help, I will do it—will do *all*, anything to meet you again, my noble boy!"

He took the notes, pressed them silently to his lips, and placed them away in his bosom, as if they were souvenirs too sacred to place elsewhere.

The stranger's bosom heaved; his own stalwart frame shook; a pearly tear dropped down, and then another, and another, on his long white beard. He laid the open letter on the table, and rising, turned without a word to the door.

Suddenly, however, quick as lightning, he faced the old man, and as he raised his tall form, his chest rising and falling tumultuously, he cried aloud:

"BEN!"

One wild, startled look, a convulsive gasping, and the old man reeled and fell forward, his brawny arms, now nerveless, clutching the other passionately around the neck.

"God be praised!" was all old Ben could say, as he drew the form of the richly-clad stranger to his bosom, and held him there in a giant's grasp.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 318.)

A DREAM OF PEARLS.

BY F. X. HALIFAX.

I dreamed one night, one beautiful night,
That I was away on the shore of Ceylon;
And I saw the palm trees—heavenly sight—
Waving above me, one by one.

And I saw the ocean, was a deep sea, diver strong—
A diver searching for hidden pearls;

And my comrades sang an orient song:
(E'en now before me the vision whirls)

E'en now before me the vision whirls;

And I see the wild-eyed ocean bird;

And I hear the voices swell, and the serpents crawl;

And I sail away, and I hear the words—
And I dive to the depths—so runs my dream.

I dive away from the beautiful scene.

I dive deep down in the water green;

And I find in the bed of the treacherous sea,
A diver, fiery, robbing, awful sea,

Where the serpents swim, and the serpents crawl;

The fairest, and rarest pearl of all.

The dreams of prophecy are not gone;

And dreams are true though wild and strange;

And hope, like a tide, comes surging on,

That I may some day find the one—

The fairest and rarest of all to me—

Somewhere in the treacherous sea.

That forever and ever will be mine;

With eyes like stars and hair like wine,

And a form like an angel's—somewhere, yes, yes,

In the sea of life, dark, fathomless.

CHAPTER XV.
CAUGHT AT LAST.

WITH the reader's permission we will carry him back to the house of Colonel Isaac Hayne, where, in the second chapter of our story, we first encountered this devoted patriot.

Colonel Hayne yearned for active life. He was under a parole of honor—a parole forced from him by the British commander at Charleston by the employment of arguments that no man could resist. Hayne became the enemy's prisoner, while his wife and children lay dying with the small-pox, and eager to be at their side, he took the oath of allegiance to the king. He was bidding his time. He believed that an expulsion of the royal armies from the district would absolve him, and during the fortnight that followed the battle of Hobkirk's Hill, events had taken a favorable turn for the patriots.

But the argus eyes of the British were on the high-minded partisan, and they panted for a pretext under which they could take his noble life.

Isaac Hayne knew this, but he resolved to follow the dictates of his conscience.

The partisan occupied one of the spacious parlors of his residence one night in the early part of May; but not alone.

A youth, burly and strong, and with clear eyes and a handsome face, stood beside him at the table, on which lay a rough but accurate map of Dorchester and its surroundings.

The hour was quite late, and the heavy shutters, tightly closed, prevented the light in the room from being seen by persons without the house.

"I will lay your plans before Marion," the patriot's young companion said, folding the map. "More; I will urge their adoption. Sumter meets him at dawn in Camp Secret, and to be present I must needs ride away."

"But the girl! Will you take her with you?"

"No. Her presence here is not suspected, and here she is safest. A camp is not a suitable place for a female of her tender years, and I am content to leave her in the care of such a patriotic chief as Isaac Hayne."

"Can't? Do you know who I am?"

"No! I care less."

The Tory was getting bold.

"I've been here before," the visitor said.

"Do you not recollect the young corporal who rode with Colonel Holly to this place—the young corporal whom you admitted bore a striking resemblance to your daughter Helen? Ah! I see that you have not forgotten. I am that man! I am Jotham Nettleton!"

"You! Where's your uniform?"

"At the fort. These clothes illy become a man who has charged with Tarleton into the enemy's ranks. I do not look like the hand-some dragoon in the 41st Royal Horse. I have been through the shadows of death. I rode into Marion's camp. He discovered me, and a squad of his marauders led me to the gallows-tree. But there I showed a little Nelson muscle. I escaped, but a ball struck me and I fell over a precipice into the most accursed river in South Carolina. Thank God! I did not die. Wounded and almost dead I crawled beneath the bank and swore to live. How I burrowed there, fearing to venture out lest Marion's men should recapture me. I need not tell you. I did not come hither to shock your ears with the narrative of a soldier's suffering. But I want to tell you something: last night I slept in a thicket, and in a tree, at that."

"In a tree?"

"Beneath me were Marion's men, who took possession of the thicket after I had entered. Your daughter was there."

Hugh Latimer stepped forward excitedly.

"Helen!" he cried.

"Yes, Helen. I need not tell you about the conversation that I heard. Hugh Latimer, there is a tattoo on that girl's shoulder—it is a singular device—a crown pierced by an arrow! On my shoulder is the same tattoo. I am Helen's brother!"

The dragoon almost shrieked the last sentence, and before the Tory could draw he found himself in the grip of the excited man.

Jotham Nettleton's eyes flashed fire and his face was livid.

"She is my sister and you are not her father!" he cried, his hot breath almost scorching Hugh Latimer's cheeks.

The Tory's face grew pale, and he tried to wrench himself from the vice-like grip of the dragoon.

"You are the man for whom I have been looking since my landing on these shores," the trooper continued. "Your name is Hugh Latimer here. Was it that in England? Did the people call you Hugh Latimer when the good ship *Fict* left London? I remember the treacherous practiced on board—the storm, the holes made in the *Fict's* bottom, the awful scene of shipwreck and death. I was a boy of six then; my sister Helen a babe in her mother's arms. Mother was washed ashore with Helen clasped to her bosom. The babe reached your hands; the wreckers buried mother. You fled the realm with the charge of crime against you, for, as you know, one of your tools confessed in the hour of death. Those papers are Helen's birthright; they take from you that which you have usurped. Hugh Latimer, Mortimer Holland, murderer! usurper! Ha! give me the papers!"

A Bengal tiger seemed to have hold of the Tory. He was shaken by his visitor till his teeth chattered, till his joints seemed rent apart.

"I have found you! When I knew that the crown and the arrow were on Helen's arm, then I knew that you were the man for whom I have been looking. It was to seek you that I enlisted for the American war. My heart is not in the strife. I love freedom; but I want you—you!"

The Tory's face was the picture of ghastliness and a picture that Jotham Nettleton seemed to enjoy.

"The papers! quick! There are noises below."

The grip grew tighter on the Tory's body, and he relinquished the documents which he had almost cast upon the fire.

"Good!" said the trooper. "Now for my revenge!"

"What! are you going to stain your hands with crime?" gasped Hugh Latimer. "I did not harm your mother. Martha Nettleton died in a storm, and—"

"God sent the storm; but your men sunk the *Fict!*" cried the trooper.

ing for him, when Helen's hand fell upon his arm.

"Have you any more news?" she asked. "I have been cooped up in this old house for a fortnight, and have heard but little about the war."

"We are gaining ground everywhere!" said Marion, with a glow of triumph on his sallow cheeks. "Greene is recovering; Cornwallis is marching to his doom in the north, and God is smiling on the colonies. Dorchester will soon be ours. The crippled bird has left Wingdon Hall—"

"What! is Lancaster Wingdon out?" cried Helen.

"Yes. He is hunting for two men!"

"Two men?"
That boy and a renegade trooper named Nettleton."

Helen started at mention of the last name.

"Where is the trooper?" she asked.

"I do not know. He slew your father—I mean Hugh Latimer," replied Marion. "Nicholas has doubtless told you about the writing—the last he ever executed—that was found on his table."

"Yes."
"We are hunting for the trooper as well as that one-armed Tory boy. I believe that he carries papers that concern you, Helen. If he means Lancaster Wingdon one or both will die. If Nicholas and the young Tory have a recontre blood will flow."

Marion turned almost abruptly from the young girl and stepped to Hayne's side.

Helen was then joined by Nick of the Night, and the twain were engaged in an earnest conversation when a young negro wormed his way through the partisan band, and handed him a note which was sealed with the waxen crest of Wingdon Hall.

The boy started when the sign met his eye, and Helen watched him with intense curiosity as he stepped toward a torch and broke the seal.

The chirography that met his gaze was elegant and femininian in shading, and in the glow of the torch the young partisan read:

"Nicholas Brandon—Bandit! Are we never to meet that we may settle forever the accounts that we owe one another? Like a coward, you fly from me now; but I am still here. My master will give you this, and more by far, deliverance that every night at twelve I wait for you at the double oaks near Wingdon Hall. I dare you to meet me there alone, and in this challenge, I brand you coward! bandit! murderer! Carolina is too small for you and—" LANCASTER WINGDON.
"Of Wingdon Hall."

The reader gritted his teeth when he read the trio of epithets that the challenge contained; but, when the last sentence was mastered, a smile overspread his face.

"That is true, Lancaster Wingdon, that is true!" were the words that rippled over his lips, and folding the paper he returned to Helen.

"I am going away," he said in a tone which did not rouse her suspicions. "The negro's message is important."

He took her hands, and, unseen by the men about them, snatched a hurried kiss from her lips.

"Come!" he said to the sable messenger. "Is he am, massa?" was the reply.

A few moments later the young partisan, mounted on his horse and followed by Whig, the gallant dog, called Marion from his council with Hayne and several trusted lieutenants.

"Good-by, General," said the boy, putting out a hand which Marion took with great surprise. "If I am not in your camp at day-break you will find me beneath the double oaks near Wingdon Hall. Send no one after me, as you value the tried friendship of Nick of the Night."

Marion wrung the boy's hand, and gave him a look that seemed to fathom the secret of his sudden departure.

The next moment the twain had separated, and the young partisan and the Wingdon slave were riding away.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 322.)

TO IRENTHIA.

BY SOLITAIRE.

Oh! bright be thy home on that far distant shore,

Where the glad flowers bloom every month in the year;

Where the south winds come whispering the green valleys o'er;

And the joy-weeping dew-spirit drops its big tear,

When the day-god shall sing amidst islands of roses,

And moonlight shall shame with its radiance the day;

And the zephyr's soft wing on the light stream repose;

Think, sweet lady, think on the friend that's away,

Oh! think on the heart that throbbed for those alone,

Those songs which we sung (oh, the memory is dear!)

By that sweet winding river, e'en now the low tone

Of its breathing waves softly, and melts on the ear.

You'll remember, sweet one, when the twilight appears,

And gloriously brilliant the eve-star comes forth,

There are those who are looking through memory's tears

And watching with thee from the cold, distant north.

Sweet lady, farewell: we may meet nevemore,

But the tender-dew that falls is now telling to me

That bright hours of the past shall thy memory come o'er,

And twere Heaven to know I'm remembered by thee.

OLD DAN RACKBACK.

The Great Exterminator: OR, THE TRIANGLE'S LAST TRAIL!

BY OLL COOMES,
AUTHOR OF "HAPPY HARRY," "IDAHO TOM,"
"DAKOTA DAN," "OLD HURRICANE,"
"HAWKEYE HARRY," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER XIV.

A RETROSPECTION.

In order that we may introduce other important characters to our readers without confusion, it becomes necessary that we now go back a few days beyond the time of the last events recorded and narrate the events, incidents and adventures of Idaho Tom and his gallant band of boy-rangers that transpired during their passage through the Black Hills.

With no other outward motive than that begot of the spirit and love of adventure, had Captain Taylor, or as he was better known, Idaho Tom, and his band crossed the mountain and penetrated the Black Hill country. They knew at the time that it was forbidden ground—in other words, the reservation of the Sioux Indians; but, fully acquainted with the habits of the savages, their forbearance and the extent to which violations of the government treaties were usually carried, the rangers resolved to do nothing that would bring them into antagonisms with the red-skins. Before they reached the hills, however, news of the discovery of gold came to their ears; and as a number of them were

experienced miners, they modified their original intention of passing straight through the hills, and concluded to spend a month or so prospecting for gold. Procuring a number of pack animals and a mining outfit they struck out for the most unfrequented parts of the Black Hills. They went into camp in the valley of a little stream tributary to the Powder River. There was plenty of grass here for their animals, game in the vicinity that would furnish them with food, and good prospects for mining.

Although they were far from the Indian strongly, and in a very rough and desolate part of the hills, they found one or two well-beaten trails, bearing the imprint of hoofed feet, running southward toward the Indian village. All attempts on the part of the rangers to trace these paths to some starting point failed, for all they were very desirous of knowing who their neighbors were, if there were any at all in the neighborhood.

For several days they continued to ramble on foot among the hills, and finally becoming satisfied that they were alone, they began prospecting for gold.

Dividing up into three parties, they scattered out in different directions through the hills, returning to camp at evening to report the success of the day's work.

On the evening of the third day, as Idaho Tom, Darcy Cooper and Sam Walton were returning to camp, their attention was drawn aside by sight of a light blue smoke curling up from among the hills and tree-tops some distance to their right. They had never noticed it there before, and so their curiosity became aroused. Idaho Tom gave his tools to Walton and Cooper, and sending them on to camp, he struck out across the country to make some inquiry regarding the smoke. His way lay over a series of rough, broken hills, deep-winded valleys and yawning chasms and pitfalls. And as it was nearly night, the young miner was compelled to pick his way with extreme caution.

In the course of an hour he arrived in the immediate vicinity of the smoke, which he could still see lazily curling into the air above the tree-tops. That it rose from a camp-fire in the valley he had not a doubt; and so he began to pick his way down the almost perpendicular face of the cliff overhanging the vale.

Arrived safely below, what was his surprise to find no signs of a fire there. He glanced up and down the valley but could see nothing; and so he became somewhat puzzled. The valley was only about four rods wide, and guarded on each side by high bluffs, from whose face sharp ledges of rock were thrust out, here and there, above and below, the tree-tops. Huge pines, with heavy tops, shot heavenward from the valley in whose soil centuries had rooted them. Their tops were so interlaced that not a patch of sky could be seen through the dense canopy. From the projecting ledges one could have walked out upon the tree-tops.

A sort of foreboding silence pervaded the place.

A subdued light enabled Tom to discern the surrounding objects indistinctly.

He glanced carefully around upon all sides. He searched the bluffs towering above him with a keen eye; but as he could hear nor see any signs of life, he turned his face toward camp in no little disappointment.

The shadows of evening had long since begun to gather in this narrow, mountain defile, and as night was close at hand, Tom saw the necessity of hurrying along, and so moved away as rapidly as possible.

Suddenly a full score of mounted men swept around a bend in the valley into plain view.

Tom stopped and started back in surprise and fear. His first thoughts, when he saw they were white men, was, that they were a band of pro-Confederate freebooters, and he was about to seek safety in flight, when, upon a second glance, he discovered that the horsemen were a party of United States troops, the foremost of whom wore the uniform of a major of cavalry.

Idaho Tom stood his ground without the least fear, and as the horsemen drew up before him, he saluted them by touching his hat.

"Well, whom have we found here?" demanded the major, eying Tom from head to foot as though he were some contemptible creature scarcely worthy of inspection.

"My name, sir," replied Tom, politely, "is Thomas Taylor."

"And what are you doing here, Thomas Taylor?" the officer asked, his tone tinged with sarcasm.

"Having a bit of sport," responded Tom, with a confused smile.

"Do you know, sir, that you have no business here on this reservation—that that you are trespassing?" asked the major, with a martial air, and a display of self-arrogance.

"I'm doing nothing objectionable to the Indians."

"Sir, that is not the question—the idea at all. Orders have been issued, sir, to arrest every man found within the limits of this reservation and march him off, especially if he has no business here. And, sir, by the authority vested in me, I shall be under the necessity of escorting you to the head-quarters of General Custer."

"Indeed!" replied Tom, somewhat puzzled over his dilemma; "this is something I had hardly expected; and if you will allow me to go on, I will promise to quit these hills with all possible speed."

"I can, and will do no such a thing, sir. My duty is imperative; moreover, I have no assurance you would keep your word."

"What do you take me for, major?" Tom asked, a slight flush mounting to his handsome face that appealed directly to the soldier's admiration.

Stung to the quick by Tom's reply, the major retorted:

"Sir, I take you for an insolent puppy; and I desire you to understand that no further impudence will be tolerated," and turning to two of his men, ordered them to take Tom into custody and march him along in rear of the command.

"Is it an angel?" Tom asked himself.

He could see that she was young—not over eighteen. Her form was graceful and sylph-like, and clothed in a plain, spotless robe of white over which fell a wealth of black, silken hair. Her face seemed as white as the robe she wore in the dim twilight. It possessed a wild, imperious look. Dark eyes, radiant with celestial love, looked from out her white face upon the prisoner, filling his soul with a strange, speechless silence.

Mute as a statue of surprise, Idaho Tom stands watching the lovely vision descending to earth. In the fingers of one hand he sees a small, glittering knife resembling the blade of a stiletto, but it gives him no fear.

He mechanically raises his eyes. He starts back with a low exclamation, for out of the blackness of heaven he sees again that angelic apparition descending to earth. Still robed in white it—still upon the lips is pressed a snowy finger!

"Is it an angel?" Tom asked himself.

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Then, to his surprise, she cut the sign of the cross upon his breast with her finger, and upon his back, also.

This done, she advanced to the spot where

she first touched earth, and, kissing the tips of her little fingers to Tom, rose aloft in the air—up out of sight in the blackness of night.

Starting, as if from a terrible nightmare, Idaho Tom glanced wildly around him, then turning, glided out of the camp—up the hillside and away into freedom.

And still the soldiers slept on.

CHAPTER XV. "LOOK OUT!"

SLOWLY through the lonely hills Idaho Tom made his way.

The branches of the pine above him swayed in the night-breeze; a wolf howled in the distance.

All was dark and dismal as eternity, and the young miner could make his way onward only at the risk of breaking his neck. He had been schooled in the mountains, however, and there were no dangers possessed by the deep canyons, the rugged bluffs and treacherous ground, but what he was familiar with.

The soldiers made their supper off cold rations; then heaping armloads of fuel on the fire, they sat down around it to recount the day's journey and adventure. Thus they spent an hour or two; finally they began to drop off, one by one, to rest. The earth was a bed, the hollow of their saddles a pillow, and their blankets and the dense canopy of pine boughs their only covering.

The commandant, and one or two scientific gentlemen, were finally the only ones that remained up. They seated themselves together and engaged in examining a map, making notes of the day's explorations, and selecting a route for the morrow.

Meanwhile, Idaho Tom had been given a blanket, and his bonds lengthened so that he could lie down at pleasure. He wrapped the blanket around his shoulders, and seating himself upon the ground, leaned against the tree to which he was bound. Closing his eyes, he engaged in mental reflection. He had made no attempt to secure his release. He resolved to wait until the major was not only at leisure, but alone. He concluded that if there were no one to witness the man's authority and imperious dignity, he might engage him in a friendly conversation, and thereby effect some terms of conciliation. While waiting for this opportunity, he fell into a gentle doze, from which he awoke with a sudden start. His eyes were turned upward, and in the dim glow of the subdued light an apparition unfolded itself to his view—an apparition that bound him speechless with horror to the spot.

It was the form of a woman—a young and lovely girl robed in white, standing indistinctly outlined in the dusky shadows above. She stood in mid-air with no visible means of support; and with a white finger, upon which flashed a hoop of gold, pressed upon her lips, floated—upward into the overhanging shadows of night.

Tom had obtained but a mere glimpse of this mysterious form, and his mind had received such a sudden shock by sight of it, that for a minute he believed he was still dreaming as he had been before he awoke. Again and again he reassured himself that it was but the vagaries of an excited mind. But in spite of his efforts to the contrary, the truth would force itself upon him, and at length that strange feeling which a mystery engenders, took possession of his mind.

When the commandant arose and started to his tent, the young ranger was so confused that he let slip the opportunity for which he had been waiting so long, to speak to the officer. Then followed the uncomfortable assurance of being alone, in one sense of the word, with the mystery of the apparition weighing upon both body and mind.

Finally a corporal of the guard went out with reliefs, and the others came in, replenished the fire, dried the dampness that had accumulated on their clothing from the heavy mist, then wrapped themselves in their blankets and laid down to rest.

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THE GHOST OF MUSIC.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

He was a very pensive chap
With hair exceeding long,
He bought a two-dollar and a half accordion, and
went to blowing it strong.

With heroism misapplied
He pumped and fingered the keys,
And the more he jerked out of it seemed to
simply a lack of harmony and grease.

That the instrument had lost some notes
Was plainly understood—
But unfortunately there wasn't enough of them
But one good.

We heard it every living hour,
And in the hours dead.
And a very debilitating cold in its nose had that
machine.

We wondered at his nervous power
Such playing did not tax,
And asked him if he wouldn't kindly let us help him
to play on it with an ax.

We told him Berg would come around
As soon as he should learn
How he was knocking all the breath out of that in-
strument's body, and he answered, "You be-
darn."

And day and night his pensive soul
Till in the course of six months it began to look like
it might eventually become a bore.

The soul of Thomasson rose in us,
And so one day at noon
We gave that accordion a broken dose of dynamite
for the purpose of raising the tune.

When he returned he picked it up,
But that came a crash, and there wasn't enough of that
young chap found on which to make a rhyme.

The coroner's jury sat on his hat,
Their verdict—"It appears
This young man's gone with his accordion to join
in the Music of the Spheres."

The Men of '76.

MONTGOMERY,

The Chivalrous Soldier.

BY DR. LOUIS LEGRAND.

In Richard Montgomery we have a truly knightly character—brave, generous and just. He asked no man to go where he would not lead. He deferred to authority and cheerfully sacrificed comfort, happiness and personal wishes to the demands of duty. He was patriotic from love of liberty and the rights of man. He was, as a soldier, ardent, quick to act and persevering even in the direst situations. As a leader he was prudent, wise and reliant. In many respects like Wolfe, his once-beloved leader, the Fates seem to have drawn both to the same field for their martyrdom—precious offerings on the altar of glory.

Richard Montgomery was of Irish parentage. Born in the north of Ireland, A. D. 1730, his tastes and temperament led him to the profession of arms. At the early age of eighteen he entered the British army and was assigned to serve in America. He was present at the second siege of Louisburg, Cape Breton Island, (July 1758), where his gallant conduct won him a lieutenancy. He served in Amherst's army, operating on Lake Champlain against the powerful French forts, and thus obtained a local knowledge of the region wherein, at a later day, he was to act in a leader's capacity. The conquest of Canada having been secured to the British arms, the seat of war with France drifted to the West India islands, where the two great powers met in magnificent combat—the prize being the superbly-fruited island of Martinique. In that grand naval and land assault [see our sketch of Gates] Montgomery participated and won for himself a captaincy. In the British service promotion is chiefly by *purchase* of commissions; hence, its army swarms with the sons of noblemen and gentlemen of means. For a soldier to mount from an ensign to a captaincy, by service alone, is a mark of exceptional merit. Such was Montgomery's mode of advancement.

After the peace between France and Great Britain (1763) Montgomery returned to England and remained nine years, on leave of absence, still retaining his commission in the British army, but in 1772 he resigned that commission to come to America and participate in what his clear vision must have perceived was a coming struggle for nationality.

His record as a soldier, his courtly bearing, his fine intelligence, won for him a warm reception, and he soon made permanent his interest in American affairs, espousing the daughter of Judge Robert R. Livingston. Then he retired to a farm in Dutchess county, on the banks of the Hudson, to enjoy the sweets of a tranquil life.

But, the spirit of discontent became the monitor of alarm; the long-gathering outburst came: the blow that fell at Lexington and Concord was the signal for every patriotic heart to assert its majesty. The call reached Montgomery in his just-dawning home life. He was elected to represent his county in the Provincial Assembly.

Colden, the British Lieutenant-Governor, still maintained the semblance of authority, but the people's representatives were masters. A Committee of One Hundred, comprised of the best citizens of New York City, was organized as a Committee of Safety. It was composed of patriots and recognized royalists alike, for, not for a year after the battle of Bunker Hill, did the great mass of people really hope for and talk of independence; the fight, for the first year, was a mere rebellion against unjust taxation. Not until June 7th, 1776, was the subject of independence formally considered in the Continental Congress. Henry Lee, of Virginia, then introduced a resolution, declaring that "The United Colonies are and ought to be free and independent States—that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown, and that their political connection with Great Britain is and ought to be totally dissolved."

This was treason, under English law—the "overt act" that would, if the rebellion failed, consign every open advocate of it to the gallows. But, the Colonies were prepared for that final step. A year's war had educated both people and representatives to the "overt act." Resistance to an unjust imposition of taxes had drawn armies together; had organized all the Colonies in a "Common Cause," had encouraged distaste for British rule and a foreign authority; and when Tom Paine burst out in Philadelphia, in April, 1776, with his pamphlet called "Common Sense," the public heart so responded that Congress had to act. Lee's resolution was debated with closed doors, with every injunction to secrecy, and the immortal Declaration of Independence was the result.

Montgomery was, even thus early in the struggle, sleeping in a warrior's grave on the bloody Heights of Abraham!

Montgomery was appointed by the Continental Congress, a brigadier-general, in June, 1775. He wrote: "The Congress having done me the honor of electing me a brigadier-general in their service, is an event which must put an

end, for awhile—perhaps forever—to the quiet scheme of life I had prescribed for myself; for, though entirely unexpected and undesired by me, the will of an oppressed people, compelled to choose between liberty and slavery, must be obeyed." The keynote to actions that led him to martyrdom!

"At the time of receiving his commission," says Irving, "Montgomery was about thirty-nine years of age and the beau ideal of a soldier. His form was well proportioned and vigorous; his countenance expressive and possessing; he was cool and discriminating in council, energetic and fearless in action. His principles commanded the respect of friends and foes, and he was noted for winning the affections of the soldiery."

The capture of Ticonderoga and Crown Point [see sketches of Ethan Allen and Arnold] made both Allen and Arnold eager for an immediate invasion of Canada before it could be strengthened by troops from Great Britain. Both men urged the matter on the several northern Colonial assemblies and on the Continental Congress. Washington, at an early stage of the contest, recognized the desirability of having Canada join in the revolution, and, now, seeing the danger of a descent of British and Indians from the north, if Montreal and Quebec were not secured, entered into the scheme of invasion, or, rather, as it was understood, of co-operation with the elements in Canada favorable to the cause of the Colonies. Congress assented, and authorized General Schuyler to assume command of the enterprise. Proceeding to Lake Champlain, he thence sent out emissaries into Canada, who all reported favorably to a "rising" upon the appearance of the American forces. A deputation of Canadian chiefs visited Washington at the Cambridge camp, in August (1775) to offer their co-operation in securing Canada against the British, and then revealed the fact that the British commander in Canada, Sir Guy Carleton, was striving to enlist all the savages for a movement on the border settlements and the forts on Champlain. This determined Washington to hasten matters; so Schuyler was encouraged to push forward into Canada, from Ticonderoga, where about two thousand troops of truce were scorned. All efforts to reach the citizens of the town, to obtain their co-operation, were futile. Arnold's failure, in his first operations [see sketch of Arnold] had rendered the enemy confident. A siege was therefore necessary. A siege by a force not exceeding nine hundred effective men, ill-equipped in every respect! It was a mere pretense, of course, for nothing else remained. Guns were mounted and did some destruction to the town, but not to the powerful fortifications. Then Montgomery resolved, as the year closed the term of enlistment of the men, to attempt to carry the place by storm. This attempt was made at two o'clock in the morning of Dec. 31st, at odds which would have sickened other hearts than those of the two leaders, and of such spirits as Dan Morgan, whose exploits on that terrible day we have recorded. The brave Montgomery led the storming party along the river shore, doubling Cape Diamond, to strike the lower town—a way at all times dangerous, but treacherously so then, when snow and ice cumbered the narrow passage. He was with the pioneers; the first barrier was surprised and won, after a brief struggle. Then he rushed on, on battery, followed by his three hundred men, coming forward on the run. A single gun flashed from the battery, and a winnow of death followed. Montgomery and one of his aids were killed almost instantly. Disorder ensued. Col. Campbell, dismayed by the terrible loss, ordered a retreat. An advance would have been to victory. The dead were left behind. Relieved of attack in that quarter, Carleton turned all his forces on the dauntless Dan Morgan, who had fought his way into the town. The death of Montgomery and the wounding of Arnold was followed by Morgan's capture.

That ended one of the most daring enterprises in the history of modern war. The body of the dead General was given honorable burial, by a foe who knew how to admire valor. How Arnold deported himself, under wounds and defeat, we have written. All that hard, desperate campaign is luminous with glory for the name that was destined to be darkened forever by infamy. If, like Montgomery, he could have perished then, how precious would now be his memory!

Montgomery's remains were removed to St. Paul's church, New York city, by order of the State of New York, and deposited, July 8th, 1818, beneath the monument erected by Congress, amid most inspiring ceremonies. This monument, in the face of the Broadway front of St. Paul's, beneath the portico, is inscribed as follows:

"This monument is erected by the order of Congress, 25th January, 1776, to transmit to posterity a grateful remembrance of the patriotism, conduct, enterprize and perseverance of

MAJOR-GENERAL RICHARD MONTGOMERY, who, after a series of successes amidst the most discouraging difficulties, fell in the attack on Quebec, Dec. 1775. Aged 37 years."

Ellis frowns were gathering on Tremayne's forehead, but Effie only sneered.

"A hundred dollars! You speak as if it were a fortune. I tell you, Ellis, I must have things like—like other people. How on earth do you suppose I feel when Mrs. Coddington or Miss Belleburn calls for me to drive, wearing their elegant carriage costumes, and I in the same dress I appear in on the street or at church?"

Tremayne smiled contemptuously.

"So you hope to rival the wife of a millionaire, and the only daughter of a wealthy banker, do you? You, the wife of the cashier at Wingfield and Sons, on three thousand a year! Effie—have nothing to do with women who are, unconsciously, perhaps, sowing seeds of discontent and extravagance in your heart."

"I am neither foolish nor extravagant, Ellis; you shall not say so. But I must have some money to get a new suit. Oh! Ellis, such a heavenly shade of prune, and you know I can wear so well one particular shade, just the very one I saw at Stewart's. Honestly, I haven't a dress to wear to Judge Lamar's reception."

Effie ate his egg with very little show of satisfaction, and his silence, while bitter thoughts were rushing through his mind, was taken by Effie as signs of consent; and she was not slow in pressing her advantage.

"It won't cost over a hundred dollars, Ellis—very reasonable, indeed, for I shall make it nearly all myself, and I am sure you can't be displeased at that. Then say yes, won't you, Ellis, dear?"

A settled, white look came around his hand-some mouth.

"If you care more for show and fine clothes than for my respect and the consciousness that you are an economical, prudent wife who is helping her husband save instead of almost going him into debt—you can have the money."

"It won't cost over a hundred dollars, Ellis—very reasonable, indeed, for I shall make it nearly all myself, and I am sure you can't be displeased at that. Then say yes, won't you, Ellis, dear?"

A boy with a yellow envelope tapped him on the arm.

"Oh, a telegram; from my son, I presume. Wait a minute."

He deliberately adjusted his glasses, and then opened the dispatch.

"Come at once. Everything traced to T."

"JASAR WINGFIELD."

And, as he returned the paper to the envelope, he looked up to see Mrs. Tremayne dash-ing by again, her face radiant with pleasure and excitement, as Ral Belleburn talked and laughed with her.

The pretty little house seemed so lonely and deserted after Effie had gone, and Ellis Tremayne threw himself wearily on the lounge in her boudoir, his face wearing marks of strangely contorted discouragement and excitement.

For an hour or so he lay there, his eyes closed, his figure motionless, and then he arose with a half-groan of mental distress.

"This will never do. I shall go mad if I stay here with only my thoughts for—"

He had gone over to the little dressing-bureau, carelessly taking up two little pieces of paper, that Effie had entirely forgotten to hide—and a pallor, even more marked than his late deathly paleness, overspread his face as he saw the two formidable bills.

Then something very like an oath came from his set teeth.

"My temptation be on her head—my—"

He sprung suddenly to his feet as the door-bell pealed impudently, and listened with no ordinary curiosity as a man's voice demanded to see Mr. Ellis Tremayne, and heard the servant usher his company into the drawing-room.

A fierce, lurid light fairly coruscated in his eyes, and he smiled horribly as he put his right hand in his breast pocket as if feeling for something. Then he went slowly, slowly down stairs, into the presence of Mr. Wingfield and an officer of the law.

"Mr. Tremayne, you are discovered in your neat little system of embezzlement. Mr. Officer—"

Ellis stepped haughtily back.

"One moment, gentlemen, if you please. Mr. Wingfield, I am discovered. Twenty-four hours later I would have been beyond pursuit; as it is, what is the difference between a hunted life abroad, or—this?"

Quick as a flash the silvery pistol gleamed in the gas-light.

A report—a heavy fall that thundered through the house like a doom—and the husband of a woman that was too unwomanly to bear her share in the burden of life—the woman enjoying her brief hour of pleasure on the sunlit ocean shore—the woman who had it in her power, as all women who are wives have, to goad to destruction, in some form or another, or guide to happiness and success, in some means or another, this husband who was less wicked than weak, went to his reward.

And who shall say whose was the guilt? Hers, or, not who knelt and sobbed over his dead face, and tried to reason into silence an inner voice that refused to be still?

Sister-wives, be you careful, lest, although your hands and heart are not stained with a crime like this—and many a wife's hands and heart are thus reddened to-day—be careful that it lays not at your door that your husbands' lose all their faith and trust in woman's sacred vow as well as blessed privilege to share eagerly in the economies and many petty grievances that no household is without—that small though they are, if not accepted in the spirit of patience and love and forbearance, are the little vexes that destroy the vine beyond hope of recovery.

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